

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Twice Amended) A method for establishing a signaling connection with a terminal (102, 103, 104) in a central unit (101) of a communications system, said terminal and central unit comprising a network interface (107, 108, 109) and signaling unit (105, 106, 110), characterized in that it comprises steps in which

- by communication between the central unit's network interface (107, 108) and the terminal's network interface (109), information is created about the signaling protocol supported by the terminal, and
- signaling is started using a signaling unit (105, 106) in the central unit that supports the same signaling protocol as the terminal,

wherein:

- a message (201) is sent from the central unit's network interface (107) to the terminal, indicating the signaling protocols supported by the central unit,
- in response to an answer message (202) sent by the terminal indicating the terminal's selection for signaling protocol, a connection is established (203, 204) between the central unit's network interface (107) and the central unit's signaling unit (105) that supports the signaling protocol chosen by the terminal, and
- a point-to-point signaling connection (205) is established between the central unit and the terminal using the signaling protocol selected by the terminal.

2. CANCEL.

3. (Amended) The method of claim 1, characterized in that said message (203) contains a code for signaling protocol support and an associated value which is a binary number and in which each bit represents a particular signaling protocol.

5. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 1, characterized in that therein

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- by [means of] communication according to the MAC protocol layer between the central unit's network interface (107, 108) and the terminal's network interface (109), information is created about the signaling protocol supported by the terminal, and
- signaling is started using a signaling unit (105,106) in the central unit that supports the same CC protocol layer signaling protocol as the terminal.

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8. (Amended) A central unit (101) in a communications system, comprising a signaling unit (105, 106) and a network interface (107, 108), characterized in that it is equipped so as to use in a signaling connection with a terminal of the communications system at least one signaling protocol, to which end it comprises means for indicating to the terminal the signaling protocols supported by the central unit, means for receiving from the terminal an indication about the capability of the terminal of supporting a particular one of the signaling protocols the central unit indicated to the terminal, and means for setting up a signaling connection via the central unit's network interface, using a selected signaling protocol between the central unit and the terminal.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

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Please amend the abstract as follows:

-- A communications system comprises a central unit (101) and terminals (102, 103, 104). It is equipped so as to establish and maintain a signaling connection between the central unit and at least one terminal using one of at least two alternative signaling protocols. To that end it comprises in the central unit a device for indicating to a terminal the signaling protocols supported by the central unit, and a device for setting up via the central unit's network interface a signaling connection between the central unit's signaling unit and the terminal, using a selected signaling protocol. Correspondingly, in the terminal the system comprises a device for indicating to the central unit the signaling protocol supported by the terminal in response to a message sent by the central unit as well as a device for setting up via the terminal's network